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# American Drama and Ritual: Nebraska Football

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# American Drama and Ritual: Nebraska Football

MARY JO DEEGAN AND MICHAEL STEIN (U.S.A.)

## *Abstract*

Football is a major sport in the United States because of its dramatic enactment of social values of violence, bureaucracy, sexism, and commercialism. The spectators of this game are particularly enthralled in the state of Nebraska. Here, a state with a large geographical area and a small, predominantly rural population, the fans have elevated Nebraska football to a significant ritual and source for identification. As avid supporters they dress in the team colors, red and white; participate in pre- and postgame celebrations; travel great distances; and emotionally express their loyalty and dedication to "Big Red."

By combining the dramaturgical perspective of Erving Goffman with Victor Turner's concepts of liminality and *communitas*, we have a theoretical framework for analyzing and evaluating cultural dramas in modern society. Nebraska football as a dramatic ritual, then, reveals its creative and destructive roots in American society.

Dramaturgy is a powerful sociological tool for analyzing social interaction and participation. We shall use it here to examine a significant drama enmeshed in American society and culture: Nebraska football. Before proceeding to an analysis of this ritual, we shall present the dramaturgical concepts of Erving Goffman and Victor Turner. These major theorists are selected not only because of the value of their respective works, but also because they provide complementary conceptual tools for our analysis.

Erving Goffman, the most innovative writer and leading proponent of dramaturgy, has elaborated a theory of self-presentation and the social principles guiding everyday action based on man's life as theater (1976, 1974, 1969, 1967, 1963, 1961, 1959). Goffman, who eloquently depicts modern man's life and dilemmas, consistently views man as alienated and manipulated. (Psathas, 1977; Deegan, 1977). Deegan (1977) has proposed that this bias could be balanced and evaluated by combining his approach with Victor Turner's. The latter's studies, based on non-modern societies where formal rituals transcend and order everyday life, portray a man as part of a community which gives him dignity and meaning. Therefore, Deegan also suggests that an examination of modern ritual could bridge the gaps between these two theorists' concepts and perspectives and pro-

vide us with a more flexible and comprehensive approach. This paper, then, is an analysis of a modern American ritual which synthesizes the work of Goffman and Turner and illustrates the usefulness and strength of a new dramaturgical model.

#### THEORETICAL AND SITUATIONAL BACKGROUND

Although both Goffman and Turner use the dramatic metaphor, their concepts and the worlds they study are almost diametrically opposed. An in-depth discussion of their divergent approaches is available in Deegan (1977) but here our discussion will be limited to those concepts directly applicable to the modern American ritual of football in Nebraska.

Goffman's concepts of an "audience", "team work", "performers", (1959) "gender advertisements" (1976), "stigma" (1963), and "games" (1967), are all particularly relevant here. With each of these theoretical abstractions we obtain a view of man in everyday life, presenting appropriate behavior in situations where he must guard himself from possible attacks on his self-presentation. These enacted roles can sometimes ally him with others caught in similar situations who are in opposition to "outsiders" (audience) judging their performance (1959).

Goffman's view of team-work as negative unity, that is, unity in opposition to others, is captured in the quote below:

... Secret derogation seems to be much more common than secret praise, perhaps because such derogation serves to maintain the solidarity of the team, demonstrating mutual regard at the expense of those absent and compensating, perhaps, for the loss of self-respect that may occur when the audience must be accorded accommodative face-to-face treatment (1959:171).

Goffman further states that:

... Games place a frame around a spate of immediate events, determining the type of "sense" that will be accorded everything within the frame. (1961, p. 20).

His analysis of "character contests" also poignantly illustrates struggles of honor which are won at the expense of others' loss.

During occasions of this kind of action, not only will character be at stake, mutual fatefulness will prevail in this regard. Each person will be at least incidentally concerned with establishing evidence of strong character, and conditions will be such as to allow this only at the expense of the character of the other participants. (1967, 240)

Each of these concepts provides us with abstractions "loaded" with a view of man as defensive, attacking, and manipulative. (Deegan, 1977; Psathas, 1977). Goffman's value positions are accepted in this paper when applying his concepts.

Turner's concepts are laden with values opposing those of Goffman, i.e. man searches and finds dignity and community through and with others on specialized occasions. Man's sense of oneness with others, his sharing of common fate and humanity, is expressed by the concept of "communitas." (1969) Situations marked by highly structured events and surrounded by community myths and symbols create a situation where men allow their everyday differences to lapse and new relationships to emerge. A highly structured, or ritualized special event, is one marked by changes in statuses or rites of passage (Van Genepp, 1966). These rites of change are characterized by three stages, preliminal (rites of separation), liminal (rites of transition), and post liminal (rites of incorporation), (Van Genepp, 1966, p. 11). The liminal stage is characterized by ambiguity, heightened excitement and danger. Liminality fosters, then, the development of new forms of relationships: new bonds are created between participants joining them in an undefined status that threatens the order of everyday life. Liminality induces them to trust one another, to struggle together, and to see themselves as humans with a common fate and danger.

Extraordinary events, formal rituals, provide the community with an alternate social world to that found in everyday life. Part of the power of these events lies in their ability to evoke symbols and myths relating to the community. They create a setting in which men simultaneously experience their humanity. The feelings expressed at this time and the acknowledgement of common bonds is "Communitas".<sup>1</sup>

These special, ritual occasions are characterized by a sacred quality and are structured by the major themes and values of a culture. This "Durkheimian" quality of ritual events has been analyzed and elaborated by Stein (1977) in reference to Nebraska football.<sup>2</sup> The analysis consists of examining this event as a ritual in a religious cult: the extreme "loyalty" of the fans is comparable to that of the religious "faithful"; tithings are offered, pilgrimages made, and even weddings performed in the Nebraska stadium (red "cathedral"). Ritual clothing, discussed here later, and various interpretations of events and actions are compared to "scriptural reading". The extreme allegiance elicited by this ritual is reinforced by the geographic location of Nebraska, its small population, and the dramatic ability to make the sparsely inhabited state "number one" in a national event. All of these factors combined make Nebraska football a major ritual event enacting American values and themes.

Both writers have lived in Lincoln, the home of the University of Nebraska team, for over two years and have therefore been observers of

<sup>1</sup> There is no specific definition of the concept. Turner considers it from a variety of perspectives. See "Communitas" in the index, 1969.

<sup>2</sup> Goffman briefly mentions the possibility of such cultural events and their Durkheimian quality in his writings. See, for example, (1967, 44-45) and (1959, p. 35).

the events associated with it. Whereas Stein is an ardent fan and follower of football and other sports, Deegan is a more ardent follower of sedentary competitions such as sociological theorizing and conferences. Both have done participant observation on a series of occasions relevant to the material discussed below.

#### FOOTBALL AND THE AMERICAN DREAM

American values are enacted, displayed and observed in football. The game itself is structured along popular social themes: winning, fighting in face-to-face combat, functioning under strict time constraints, and control by arbitrary rules.<sup>3</sup>

Violent sports have, of course, been present in other cultures and times, but the conjunction of violent combat with a "secular" occasion and a bureaucratic model is uniquely American. The predominance of elaborate rules, interpreted by an arbitrator or "referee" demonstrates to the non-specialized person that one can make decisions only by virtue of holding an appropriate "office". Spectators who disagree with the interpretation of the game rules and the resulting situation, often feel superior to the referee in their judgement and immediately express an opinion with boos, hisses, swear words, and occasional thrown objects or a direct physical attack. The official office of the referee, paralleled by the bureaucratic model discussed by Weber (1947), is supported by an even more arbitrary and controlling event: the clock. The division of the game into arbitrary time units, agreed upon beforehand, creates added tension which dominates the game, particularly as it progresses. Basketball, another typical American sport, shares this peculiar relationship of control by the ticking of seconds. Football, though, is more vulnerable than basketball, having fewer "times out" and a pattern of scoring which makes each score more difficult to obtain and numerically more significant than in basketball. Americans painfully reenact in football their daily confrontation with arbitrary rules, official office holders, rational authority, and the pressures of time. Their lives are structured by these strong virtues and symbols in play as well as in work.

An equally strong American value, patriarchy, reinforces the above values: men engaged in football are the extreme embodiment of the ideal male, physically big, aggressive, violent, and controlled by arbitrary, efficient, rational, authority. While they abuse their bodies in a brutal but often graceful and lyrical manner, the ideal, typical woman—the cheer-

<sup>3</sup> The competitive, violent stressful environment of American culture is noted in numerous other ways; through types and distribution of stress-related disease (Levine and Scotch, 1970), through violent crimes (Quinney, 1975), and through our emphasis on winning, even with children at "fun" events (Shostak, 1977).



leader—screams, jumps, and displays her body. Gymnastic talents, which are sometimes included in the basis for selection, are secondary to the woman's presentation of a feminine ideal: the attractive "Miss America" model (see Deford, 1972). This sexuality is grotesquely evidenced in the cheerleader—cute, peppy, and petite—in comparison with the football player: a big, muscular brute who can "mow down" other men. Their dress accentuates these extremes. Interestingly, at Nebraska football games, the cheerleaders assume a "typical" stance watching the game by holding two large pom-poms behind their backs. The caricature of two large "cheeks" or, when held in front, of two large breasts, is strikingly apparent. The football equipment of shoulder pads, hip pads, tight pants, and helmets likewise emphasize male physiognomy and its association with "toughness". Goffman's "gender advertisements" similarly depict these "ideal" types as they appear in everyday life (1976). These static images and gestures are embodied, amplified and dramatized "on the fields". The football game, then, ritually reenacts the male's battle against other men in a violent, competitive world controlled by arbitrary rules, and tightly structured by the clock. The women, on the sidelines, dressed in sexually provocative clothing, encourage men in this battle, engaging in movements indicating their sexual availability and desirability.

Other American values are simultaneously enacted in this setting, and also characteristic of other sports, include patriotism, commercialism, the mass media, and liquor and coke (favorite "drugs"). These major themes are briefly considered here.

Commercialism's role is largely contained outside the stadium. The selling of tickets ("scalping") occurs immediately outside the entrance; programs are sold along the routes to the game; and a plane flies over the stadium during the game announcing the arrival of new cars (another American value) at local auto dealers. A new scoreboard, rising above the seats, is not only capable of producing "pictures", but also of running commentary of the game and extensive advertisements for local businesses. Patriotism is enacted with the singing of the national anthem at the start of the game and the accompanying signs of respect and allegiance. The American flag is displayed prominently. For Nebraska, though, reinforcement of patriotism is given a unique opportunity through the teams' colors of red and white. Since the fans make a serious effort to appear with at least some item of clothing, and frequently with an all red, or red and white outfit, and since denims are blue and a favorite apparel for Americans, the crowd of 75,000 people is overwhelmingly red, white and blue. Although this may be a fortuitous coincidence based on the popularity of blue denims, at one game among 50 people counted, two were wearing predominantly green clothes (the astroturf is green), eight were wearing blue and 40 were wearing red. Orange, yellow, brown, black, purple are so noticeable as to be outstanding in a section with

10,000 or more people. The police, who embody the "state" and the authority associated with it, also wear blue.

Outside commercial enterprises join in this mythmaking. A local bank offered depositors commemorative belt buckles which included representations of an Indian head, the American eagle, the shape of the state of Nebraska, and "of course" (from a television advertisement) the "Big Red N". (Omaha World Herald, Sept. 27, 1977.)

The media dominates one top section of the stadium taking treasured seating and desirable views. Similarly, with television the press rides in trucks at the sidelines, getting top priority in visual access. Thereby, this ritual is brought to the numerous others connected to and participating in the event through electronic means. In modern society, then, ritual events are subject to manipulation by the press, and particularly by television, with its support of commercialism and arbitrary control, mimicking the bureaucracy, patriarchy and time structure evinced in the game.

The amount of "cokes" sold at the game is staggering. Before the half time, one youngster (most sellers are in their early teens) had sold six full trays of soft drinks with barely enough time to refill. Peanuts, associated more with baseball than football, had few buyers. The open selling of the substance which "brings the world together" and "joins generations" is contrasted with the drinking of liquor which is forbidden but tolerated. The attitude that such behavior is illicit but acceptable was evidenced when a policeman took liquor away from one young man and the crowd only watched. When he took liquor away from someone else, the crowd indicated surprise and started to put its liquor out of sight, but when he tried it with a third person, the crowd stood up and started to boo him.<sup>4</sup> The "official authority" is seen as endowed with the power to bar scalping of tickets and the imbibing of liquor, but not to enforce this authority frequently. "Unofficial" sanction of these American values of commercialism and booze indicates their high status in the value structure.

Other symbols displayed at the game are unique to Nebraska, the "Cornhusker State". The name of the team, the "Cornhuskers", their symbol of a ruddy, rather porky, beaming farmer, a big red neon "N" on the Stadium, and the use of the state name on signs and the football field, all point to the uniqueness of the state. "Cornhuskers" refers directly to the major commercial enterprise of the state: agriculture. Politically conservative, as evidenced by the voting patterns of government officials on a state and national level, and by the populace in local and national elections, this state emphatically accepts capitalism, traditional sex roles, patriotism, and the "American Way".

<sup>4</sup> This incident was observed and noted by Theodore Trauernicht, Sept. 16, 1977.

## THE RITES OF PASSAGE: FOOTBALL AS A LIMINAL EVENT

Nebraska football is surrounded by ritual events, forecasts, and reviews. For example, there are pre-and-post-game shows with the Nebraska coach and the televised Tom Osborne show Sunday night.

Likewise, newspaper coverage is impressive. The Lincoln papers begin daily features of Nebraska football news in mid-August with their annual football review. From this point until the start of the season, the front page of the sports section will feature daily a story on some aspects of Nebraska football fortunes, for example, returning stars, new players, and coaches. Once the season begins in September, coverage becomes even more extensive, including scouting reports on opponents ("Know the Foe" appears each Thursday), and Nebraska depth charts. The Sunday paper quite naturally devotes several pages to the preceding game. This generally includes two pages of photographs of key plays, interviews with both winning and losing coaches and players, and various commentaries on the game. Though this coverage decreases markedly after bowl games have been completed, one may still find occasional stories throughout the year. These would include notes on former Huskers now playing in the professional ranks, and speculations on the previous or forthcoming season. In addition, rather extensive coverage is given to the annual intersquad scrimmage played in the spring. This event incidentally, generally draws over 10,000 fans.

Such elaborate systems of preparation and summation are events in themselves with their major focus on the game. On game-day, though, we see an analytically complete "rite of passage". Since many people travel great distances<sup>5</sup>, their pilgrimage or preliminal rites are quite elaborate and expensive, stressing two high social values: time and money. Parking is at a premium within a three or four block radius immediately prior to game time; the streets are filled with fans dressed in red, holding radios next to their ears or even wearing radio "ear muffs". The priority of the event masks to the eyes of the faithful their unusual self-presentation: their "illuminated" faces anticipating the coming event; their ritual clothing; the streams of like-minded humanity. For example, Deegan was almost paralyzed by laughter and embarrassment when confronted by a very staid looking couple, both in very traditional red clothing (her dress, his tie and shirt), "marching" arm in arm to the game with Martian-like ear phones commanding his engrossed attention. As mentioned earlier, the selling of programs and tickets occurs outside the stadium entrance. Status is made evident, for instance, by one's means of transportation, access to privileged parking space, and par-

<sup>5</sup> The 1976 Hawaii game sent 20,000 fans to Honolulu. Former in-state fans now living in such places as California and Texas make an annual voyage to attend at least one home game.

ticipation in elite program events. Such status differentials are irrelevant, though, once inside the gate. There, all spectators shed their everyday status and join in "Big Red" status.

Inside the stadium, the fans and players enter a liminal state. Will they win? What is the other team like? How will they play today? Will there be any embarrassing plays? Any "upsets"? Will we be elevated or shamed at the end? These and similar questions fill them with an agony of anticipation, expectation and dread. Although the "tests" of the game will be sharply visible and enacted by the players, the audience shares in this challenge and is the focus of study. This joint sharing in the ritual by the audience is evidenced by their reaction to the game. They move as one: highly knowledgeable of the game and the players, their responses are immediate, facilitated by radios available to approximately one in fifteen fans. (Ear radios are worn by about one in 40—a very rough estimate.) The radios transmit instantly the opinion of "experts" from their vantage viewing points. This does not mean the fans are passive; they express their opinions in raucous jubilation or heated anger. Jumping up and down, congratulating each other, smiling, clapping, yelling, are all typical expressions of joy. Shaking one's arm in a vengeful fashion, shouting "kill the bastards", and frequent boos, are all equally likely displays of anger. This participation in judgement and support is one of the prime factors, in the author's opinion, for the large expenditures supported by the fans. The challenge to their identity, the heightened sensibility of the crowd, their visible allegiance to the state, the team and the values embodied there, are all factors in the motivation to participate.

Strangers will talk eagerly and in depth about the team, its players, their skills, the opposing team and any ritual associated with the event. Often they will pound each other on the back or yell obscenities—in a word, they become intimates. They are part of one "team". Their side is "number one." Children, old people, married couples, teens, college kids, farmers—any combination of potential rivals or enemies are "friends" in this setting. Tears and laughter are indeed possible and are often spontaneously shared. The use of liquor prior to, during, and after the game aids in promoting the breaking down of barriers, but during the game liquor becomes secondary to the event. As mentioned earlier, the similar character of response of the crowd is overwhelming: they are engaged in following the game, they usually understand the signals and the plays, and the responses among thousands of people are similar.

The tension induced by the liminal status is evidenced by the crowd's movements; the frequent clutching of fists, biting of lips, concentration on the moves, and obliviousness to the surroundings unless they have relevance to the game. All of these are signs of possible "danger" — will we lose? And therefore: will we be shamed? After losing the first game

of the season, the audience marched solemnly out of the stadium, disbelief, disappointment and anger etched in their faces. One athlete said that the halls were "like tombs", and dread filled the players ("Lincoln Journal", Sept. 19, 1977). This extreme response to loss was matched by the extreme response to a hoped-for but daring expectation to "beat Alabama". The jubilation following this event was "unmatched". ("Sunday Journal and Star", Sept. 11, 1977).

But this same crowd is not necessarily a "friendly" or joyous one. The above characteristics and structure follow the expectations of Turner's ritual analysis. A more critical element is established by the application of Goffman's concepts. The audience (i.e. "team") is, indeed, united but is a solidarity based on opposition. We are "number one" because someone else, and hopefully many others, are losers. Part of the "joy" is one of triumph and even better, revenge. A "loser" is discredited, stigmatized (1963).

This theme is acted out in a serial cartoon presented on the front page of the "Lincoln Journal" the night before "football" Saturday. In the Baylor confrontation, for example, a huge "Husker" football player is bullying a Baylor "Bear" while "Journal Johnny" pours salt in the wounds of each touchdown "Lincoln Journal", Sept. 23, 1977). On occasion, Nebraska is confronted with an opponent of even greater stature than itself. This heightens the drama and the subsequent defeat or victory; such was the win over Alabama. Byant, coach of the high ranking Alabama (3rd-4th) team brought to an unexpected defeat by "low ranking" (below 20) Nebraska, ate "humble pie" in an extensive post-game report. The headline read "Byant learns another lesson." During the interview, "The 'Bear' wadded a kleenex (sic) as he slowly analyzed the game" where he managed a weak smile. The Byant interview is further "framed" (Goffman, 1974) by pictures of Nebraska's triumphs and Alabama's defeats. Thus, "their mistakes are embarrassingly evident and "our" unexpected "razzle dazzle" are highlighted by contrast. ("Lincoln Journal", Sept. 18, 1977, 7-D.)

Thus, in this setting fans cannot express only positive emotions, but can also vent hostility. The bitterness of their attacks on the other team is evidenced by the frequent reference to "kill the other side." Although this is metaphorically powerful, it draws upon the most vile of crimes and injustices. The "game" is indeed a serious one. The potentially amoral character of the crowd is shown by their response to an ill fan: numerous officials including the Red Cross, the Boys Scouts (who act to control the crowd) and the police were summoned through walkie-talkies to the emergency. The spectators to this new event watched with similar concentration and interest the human drama in the bleachers as they did the game. This parallel was summed up by one member of the audience after the hapless victim was removed: "The show's over." The turning of the

crowd against the police who tried to limit the liquor consumption illustrates this same power and response. They have come to see blood and shame; to see the symbols and myths surrounding bureaucracy and patriarchy.

This ritual and its participants, then, are not only sharing in a liminal state and restoring their beliefs in American society but sharing specific beliefs enacted in a uniquely American ritual. These values and rituals can be evaluated; that is, they are not only "interesting" indicators of our belief structure and ability to let down our barriers—they are predicated on a system of values, some of which the authors find questionable. Specifically, we object to the peripheral and limited role of women, the acceptance of bureaucratic control, the establishment of human contact at the price of losing or winning. Other American values such as patriotism, liquor, and the mass media are not seen as intrinsically oppressive. Violence is a value which is difficult to judge. Random violence does not have a high "value" but the ritual enactment of violence (with its accompanying "real violence") may, in fact, be a value to be defended. The cathartic value of harming a voluntary few within limits may provide for a release of aggression latent in man. Vicarious enjoyment and respect for such values have certainly played a major role in the history of man and are cautiously acknowledged here. (See Geertz' discussion of the Balinese cock fight, 1973:412—53.)

#### CONCLUSION

Looking at Goffman's concepts, then, we find that his view of man's interactions as manipulative and defensive is carried through in our values of sex domination and allegiance to arbitrary authority embodied in bureaucracies, the demarcation of controlled time, and the need to "win" — to live life as a "zero sum game".

With the Alabama game we see the "team" and their fans "stigmatized as losers", the performers have "lost face," they have "acted badly". Furthermore, the game is the "frame" for making these judgements. Thus, Goffman's concepts provide us with insightful tools for analyzing the football game; these concepts, useful in describing everyday life, have a different meaning and enactment at a ritual event. The rules are clearer, the drama starker, sex roles are amplified; and themes implicit in American culture are symbolically expressed and embodied.

The more positive themes of ritual events are more adequately handled by Turner's approach. Most importantly, ritual events are directly tied to "culture" and social structure. Goffman's "frames", then, are embedded in myths, symbols, and institutions which help generate, define, and maintain social behavior. (See Deegan and Stein, 1977, for a discussion

of pornographic "frames" and their relationship to myths, symbols and institutions.) Goffman's concepts of everyday life provide us with a means to examine the often deep emotions and human renewal possible through ritual participation in America. The ability to have something in common with "strangers", to sing and yell and cry in public, to "root for one's team", (i.e., community), and to publicly participate and reaffirm one's values, are strong bonds which help us tolerate and give meaning to daily life.

By combining their dramatic approaches, we find that Turner illuminates events and issues that Goffman cannot explain, and that Goffman allows us to critically evaluate these events. The future application of their perspectives provides us with a unique method for examining man and his place in society.

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## АМЕРИКАНСКАЯ ДРАМА И РИТУАЛ: ФУТБОЛ В НЕБРАСКЕ

### Резюме

Рассматривая идеи Гоффмена, мы находим, что его взгляд на взаимодействия людей как на действия манипулятивные и оборонительные, разделяются в наших оценках доминирования пола и верности произвольной власти, воплощенной в бюрократии, в демаркации контролируемого времени и в необходимости „победы”, чтобы жить жизнью „игры нулевого итога”.

В алабамской игре мы видим „команду” и ее болельщиков, „заклеймленных как проигравших”, спортсменов, „потерявших лицо”, „действовавших плохо”. К тому же игра создает „рамки” для таких суждений. Таким образом, идеи Гоффмена дают нам проницательные инструменты для анализа футбольной игры; эти идеи, полезные для описания повседневной жизни, имеют иное значение и действие при ритуальном событии. Правила здесь яснее, драма сильнее, роли полов расширены, а содержание, подразумеваемое в американской культуре, выражается и воплощается символически.

Более положительное содержание ритуальных церемоний адекватнее трактуется Тернером. Самое важное, что ритуальные события непосредственно связываются с „культурной” и социальной структурой. „Рамки” Гоффмена коренятся в мифах, символах и институциях, которые помогают воссоздать, определить и сохранить общественное поведение (см. Диген и Стейн, 1977, о дискуссии на тему порнографических „рамоч” и их связи с мифами, символами и институциями). Идеи Гоффмена повседневной жизни дают нам средства для изучения часто глубоких эмоций и обновления человека, возможных благодаря участию в ритуале в Америке. Возможность иметь что-то общее с „чужими”, петь, выкрикивать и плакать публично, „болеть за команду” (то есть за общность) и публично участвовать и поддерживать какие-то ценности это сильные узы, которые помогают нам переносить повседневную жизнь и придавать ей значение.

Сочетая их трактовку драматического аспекта, мы находим, что Тернер освещает события и проблемы, которые Гоффмен не в состоянии объяснить, и что Гоффмен позволяет нам оценивать события. Применение в будущем их взглядов даст нам замечательный метод для исследования человека и его места в обществе.



## AMERIKANISCHES DRAMA UND RITUAL: DER NEBRASKA FUßBALL

*Zusammenfassung*

Bei der Betrachtung der Konzeptionen von Goffman, sehen wir, daß seine Auffassung der menschlichen Wechselwirkung, sowohl der manipulativen als auch der defensiven in unseren Werten der Geschlechtsdomination und der Treue für arbiträre Autorität, die die Bürokratie verkörpert, in der Abgrenzung der kontrollierten Zeit, im Bedürfnis des „Gewinnens“, das Leben als ein „Null Spiel“ zu leben, durchgeführt wird.

Mit dem Alabama Spiel sehen wir die „Mannschaft“ und ihre Anhänger „gebrandmarkt als Verlierer“, die Auftretenden haben „lange Gesichter“, denn sie haben „schlecht gespielt“. Darüberhinaus ist das Spiel ein Rahmen für solche Urteile. Somit versorgt uns die Konzeption Goffmans mit einblicksreichen Werkzeugen für die Analyse eines Fußballspiels. Diese Konzeptionen, die in der Beschreibung des Alltags nützlich sind, haben andere Bedeutung und eine andere gesetzliche Verfügung bei einem ritualen Ereignis. Die Regeln sind klarer, das Drama umfassender, die Geschlechtsrollen sind erweitert. Die in die amerikanische Kultur miteinbezogenen Themen werden symbolisch ausgedrückt und verkörpert.

Die mehr positiven Themen der ritualen Ereignisse werden adäquater durch die Methode Turners behandelt. Wesentlich ist, daß rituale Ereignisse direkt mit der „Kultur“ und der sozialen Struktur verbunden sind. Der „Rahmen“ Goffmans ist in Mythen, Symbole und Institutionen eingebettet, die helfen das menschliche Verhalten zu definieren und unterstützen. (Siehe Deegan und Stein, 1977, zu einer Diskussion über pornographische „Rahmen“ und ihr Zusammenhang mit Mythen, Symbolen und Institutionen.) Die Konzeptionen von Goffman über den Alltag versorgen uns mit Mitteln für die Untersuchung der oft tiefen Emotionen und menschlicher Erneuerung, die durch rituale Teilnahme in Amerika möglich ist. Die Fähigkeit etwas gemeinsam mit „Fremden“ zu haben, zu singen, schreien und weinen in der Öffentlichkeit, „Stimmung für seine Mannschaft“ zu machen und öffentlich teilzunehmen sowie seine Werte zu bestätigen, sind starke Bindungen, die uns helfen unser tägliches Leben ertagen und ihm Bedeutung verleihen.

Bei der Zusammenstellung ihrer dramatischen Versuche, sehen wir daß Turner Ereignisse und Ergebnisse erörtert, die Goffman nicht erklären kann und, daß Goffman uns erlaubt diese Ereignisse kritisch auszuwerten. Die künftige Anwendung ihrer Perspektiven liefert uns eine einzigartige Methode, um den Menschen und seine Stellung in der Gesellschaft zu untersuchen.

## FOOTBALL DE NEBRASCA — LE DRAMATIQUE ET LE RITUEL

*Résumé*

En examinant des conceptions de Goffman — nous voyons que ses opinions sur des interactions de manipulation et défensives de l'homme — ont été transmises (en notre estimation) en domination de sexe, en subordination à l'autorité arbitraire de la bureaucratie, en division de temps contrôlé et en conquête dans la vie — du moins — du „match-nul“.

Dans des parties de football à l'Alabama — nous voyons une commande et ses partisans, stigmatisés de guignards. Les footballeurs sont traités de „perdant-face“ etc. Le cadre qui sert à prononcer ces opinions-là — c'est le jeu même au football.

Des conceptions de Goffman nous donnent un instrument pour l'analyse. Elles sont très utiles à la description de la vie quotidienne des sportifs, mais dans des épreuves rituelles — elles ont une autre importance et elles agissent autrement. Les principes sont ici plus clairs, le dramatique est plus fort, le rôle de sexe — plus développé, et les thèmes, portant sur la culture américaine — sont symboliquement exprimés et incorporés.

Les plus positifs thèmes des épreuves rituelles — étaient traités d'une manière plus adéquate — par la méthode Turner. Ce qu'importe le plus — c'est que les épreuves rituelles sont — dans la méthode Turner — directement liées à la culture et à la structure sociale. Le „cadre” de Goffman — ce sont des mythes, des symboles et des institutions, qui aident dans la formation, la définition et dans le maintien de l'existence sociale (voir: Mary J. Deegan et Michel Stein, 1977, contribution à la discussion sur le „cadre pornographique” et à ses relations aux mythes, symboles et instructions.) Les conceptions de Goffman, portant sur la vie quotidienne, nous donnent des matériaux pour examiner des émotions, souvent profondes, et la question de la rénovation de l'homme, qui est possible grâce aux épreuves rituelles américaines. La possibilité d'avoir quelque chose de commun avec des „étrangers”, de chanter, de crier et de pleurer publiquement, de faire „l'ambiance” pour sa commande — cela fait des liaisons fortes, qui aident supporter la vie quotidienne et qui lui donne de l'importance.

En comparant des considérations de Goffman et de Turner, portant sur le thème du drame — nous voyons que Turner éclaire des événements et des solutions, que Goffman ne peut pas expliquer, — mais, qu'en revanche, c'est Goffman qui nous permet d'apprécier critiqueusement des événements.

L'application — dans l'avenir — des opinions de Goffman et de Turner nous pourra livrer une méthode unique pour examiner le problème de l'homme et de sa place dans la société.